WHIRRAKEE

June 2008 Vol. 29 No. 5

Registered by Australia Post. Publication No. VBH4462

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE BENDIGO FIELD NATURALISTS CLUB

Bendigo Field Naturalists Club Inc.
Address for correspondence: PO Box 396, Bendigo 3552
ISSN 0812-423X

Office Bearers for 2007 - 2008

President	Glenise Moors	Mandurang South Road, Sedgwick	54396254
Senior Vice President	Richard Goonan		0423 418815
Junior Vice President	Matthew Comer		0409 162627
Secretary	Anne Bridley		5449 3479
Minute Secretary	Peter Ellis and Jan Orr		
Treasurer	Rob Moors		
Membership Officer	Anne Bridley		5449 3479
Excursion organiser	Richard Goonan		0423 418815
Syllabus organiser	Rod Orr	2 Cockerel Court, Bendigo	5443 5668
	(an assistant's position for the syllabus organiser is still vacant)		
Librarian (t.b.c.)	Diana Collier	31 Milroy Street, Bendigo	5443 0137
Garden Convenor/Secretary	Matthew Comer		0409 162 627
Hall Management	Maurie Lewis (assisted by Bill Holsworth and Kath Thompson)		0407 427179
Whirrakee contact	Sabine Wilkens	82 Somerville Street, Bendigo e-mail: s.wilkens@latrobe.edu.au	5443 2797

Membership of the Bendigo Field Naturalists Club is open to all those interested in Natural History. The subscription rates are: Single $34; Family $40; Concession: Single $28.50; Family $34. *Whirrakee* subscription only is $34.

General meetings are held on the second Wednesday of each month. The venue for General meetings is the Golden Square Senior Citizens Building, Old High Street, Golden Square. The invited speaker at general meetings starts at 8:00pm and meetings conclude with supper.
If a workshop is held prior to the meeting, it will be advertised and it usually starts at 7.00pm.
The Annual Meeting is held in September.

Committee meetings are held on the third Wednesday of each month at 7:30pm. Members of the Committee are the Office Bearer listed above and the following members: Bob Ruddick, Rod Orr, Jan Orr, Peter Ellis, Ben Goonan, Anthony Sheean, Stuart Fraser, Liz Graham

Excursions are conducted regularly and are advertised on the diary page of the *Whirrakee*. The assembly point for excursions is the Golden Square Senior Citizens Building, unless otherwise specified. In addition to local excursions, campouts are held several times each year, usually coinciding with long weekends or holiday periods.

The Bendigo Field Naturalists Club has one active group that meets regularly (the Fauna Study Group) and other groups that meet at irregular intervals.

Fauna Study Group: meets on the fourth Wednesday of the month at 7:30pm in the Golden Square Senior Citizens Building.
Chairman: John Burtonclay, Fadersons Lane, Mandurang (5439 5710)
Secretary: Bill Holsworth, 13 Nabilla Crs., Bendigo (5443 4063)
Equipment Officer: Maurie Lewis (0407 427179)

Bird Observers Group: This group has field excursions and the occasional lecture evening. Please consult the *Whirrakee* for details. Special bird observations should be reported to Anne Bridley 5449 3479.
To propose meetings or excursions please contact Kerrie Norris 5447 8017.

Front cover photo?...see page 2.

WHIRRAKEE

Monthly Newsletter of the Bendigo Field Naturalist Club
Vol. 29, No. 5, June 2008
Whirrakee takes its name from the Whirrakee Wattle (*Acacia williamsonii*) which is virtually endemic to the Bendigo region

CONTENT

Item	Contributor	Page
Short notices		3
Quail Hunting (letter to Gavin Jennings)	Anne Bridley	3
Lizards of the Bendigo District Part 4: Monitors (Goannas)	Darren Green	5
The Circle of Life	Chief White Cloud	6
What is an Australian naturalist anyway?	Chris and Sandra Bunn	6
May General Meeting 'Thing of the Night'	Sabine Wilkens	7
May General Meeting – Stacey Bloomfield 'Waterkeepers Australia'	Sabine Wilkens	8
Grasstrees in the Crosbie Conservation Reserve	Clive Fisher	9
Reply from Gavin Jennings' office to Anne Bridley's letter		10

Authors are responsible for the accuracy of the information they use and also for any opinions expressed in their articles. Contributions will be included as soon as possible after they are received, although articles received more than one week after the monthly General Meeting will probably be too late for inclusion in the next issue of *Whirrakee*.

Editor's Note
Another edition packed full to the brim so that some articles had to be left till next time – apologies to all those contributors. There is enough spare material now to fill an extra edition! A couple of members received an empty Whirrakee mailer last month, They were sent replacement copies, but there may be more members whose Whirrakee did not arrive. Please let me know if this happened to you and we will re-send a copy.

Front Page Illustration – Photographer: Jo Green.
This scrub python was caught out of someone's yard (it was trying to make a meal of the family dog). Darren and Jo measured it at 4.5m! They then took it out bush, away from the suburbs, and released it in the rainforest (shown in the photo). This snake was huge, strong and heavy. Darren Green wrote that even if he wasn't recovering from surgery (taking care of not doing overly strenuous activities), he still doesn't think he could have lifted it by himself. They had to stuff it in a doona cover for the car trip, as it wouldn't have fitted in their normal pillow-case sized snake bag.

Short notices

Green Corps Project

The club has become a partner with Green Corps in some environmental works that will be carried out in the forests around Bendigo from October. Green Corps is an agency that provides training and temporary employment for young people in environmental management. Works proposed include:

- Construction, repair and installation of nest boxes,
- Weed control to protect the Whirrakee Wattle, Whipstick Westringia, Eltham Copper Butter-fly and the Big Hill Reference Area
- Fencing to protect the Eltham Copper Butterfly and the Big Hill Reference Area
- New signs for the Bendigo Bushland Trail and closure of illegal tracks near One Tree Hill

All club members are invited to lend their knowledge as field naturalists to make the most of this opportunity to protect some of our threatened species.

Rod Orr will be the club's contact member. Tim Buttle from Parks Victoria (534004613 or 04290957658) is the contact person for the project.

Wildlife Rescue & Information Network

After 11 years of operation, WRIN has found that its workload has increased to the point that more rescuers and telephone operators are needed.

Training will be provided by experienced WRIN members and any time that can be given will be most appreciated.

If you feel that you can help, the Rescue phone no is 0419 356433
or email secretary@wrin.asn.au

Hamilton Field Naturalists Club 50th Anniversary Celebrations

Saturday 23 August - Sunday 24 August 2008 includes excursions in the Hamilton, southern Grampians area and dinner on Saturday night contact: Diane Luhrs 55723874 or e-mail hamiltonfnc@live.com.au

---

Field Naturalist Club of Victoria FNCV Biodiversity Symposium 2008

Sunday 14 September
Topic: Birds and the Urban Environment
contact: Mary Gibson 92517466 or e-mail maryg@deakin.edu.au

Biodiversity Quiz Answers

(from 'Victoria Naturally Alliance' ebulletin No 12, via Stuart Fraser)

Question 1

What am I? Once so common in the native grasslands of north-west Melbourne I was often referred to as 'Snow-in-the-paddocks'. However, my habitat has long since disappeared and there are now only two places in the 'wild' you will find me, one being Melbourne's Tottenham railyard.

Answer: Originally confined to the grassland plains west of Melbourne the Sunshine Diurus has suffered terrible decline since European settlement. Now wild populations can only be found at the Tottenham railyard and Laverton North Grassland Reserve, where it was reintroduced. It is one of the most threatened orchids in Australia. Sources: DSE action statement, Railtrails Australia

Question 2

Ancient Greenling, Pretty Relict, Streamcruiser, Mosquitohawk and Mystic are found only in Australia. What are they? Birds, orchids or dragonflies.

Answer: There are more than 300 species of dragonflies in Australia, many of them found no where else on Earth. Source: The Complete Field Guide to Dragonflies of Australia, Gunther Theischinger and John Hawking.

Question 3

Victoria's open coast is known for its species richness, which exceeds that of: a) California b) Chile c) South Africa d) All of the above

Answer: All of the above.

Source: VNPA Marine and Coastal submission to Land and Biodiversity at a Time of Climate Change discussion paper.

Question 4
In which of Victoria's heathlands, internationally-known for their wildflower and orchid displays, can you find more than a quarter of the state's native plant species?
Answer: The Anglesea Heathlands contain exceptional biodiversity and provide important habitat for rare and endangered animals such as the Rufous Bristlebird, New Holland Mouse and White-footed Dunnart. Source: Surfcoast Shire.

The bulletin is a great read, go to: http://victorianaturally.org.au/index.php

---

Stubble Quail Hunting
Letter from Anne Bridley (BFNC secretary) to Gavin Jennings

The Hon Gavin Jennings MLC
Minister for the Environment

Dear Mr Jennings,

I am writing to express our Club's concerns about the 2008 Stubble Quail hunting season.

1.Monitoring
We understand that is no direct monitoring of the quail's numbers. According to the DSE website, hunters are surveyed for their self reported take. The problems with this indirect method should be obvious. Concentration of hunter effort in smaller and smaller refuges can mask declining numbers overall. This is in contrast to accepted practice for duck hunting, where direct surveys of duck numbers are carried out as well as bag inspections and the hunter mail survey.

2. Bag Limit
We found to our astonishment that the daily post-opening limit of 10 ducks per hunter was set in 1931. Was the daily bag limit of 20 for Stubble Quail also set that long ago? If so, it obviously also bears no relation to their current numbers. According to the DSE website, bag limits that are too high have little effect on numbers shot and are therefore ineffective in regulating the numbers of birds killed. If we use DSE's figures, for the last 5 years the average opening day bag per hunter is 5 birds, with a total average seasonal number killed being 34. At about 8900 active quail hunters, this would be 300,000 quail killed per season. This suggests that a daily bag limit of 20 is too high. We suggest that it should be reduced to the average actual bag, 5 per day.

3. Declining Numbers
There has been a significant contraction in the habitat of Stubble Quail due to conversion of its main habitat of native grassland to other uses, and to changes in agricultural practices which have lowered the quality of cereal stubble as habitat. This, combined with the ongoing dry of the last decade, has very likely lead to a considerable decrease in quail numbers since the bag limit was established. This decline in numbers is also noted on the DSE website.

4. Identification Test
There is no quail identification test for hunters, unlike for duck, although quail identification is more difficult than duck. As stated by DSE, Plains Wanderers are shot by hunters. There is a very real possibility of protected quails and button-quails being killed by mistake.

We ask you to suspend Stubble Quail hunting until the species status is properly assessed. At the very least, ban quail hunting in any area where Plains Wanderer occur, establish on the ground monitoring, reduce the bag limit to 5 per day and introduce an identification test for hunters.

Yours sincerely

Anne Bridley (Sec)

Editor's note: The answer from the Minister's office was received in time for this edition. It is shown on page 10.

Lizards of the Bendigo District

Part 4: Monitors (Goannas)

Author and Photographer: Darren Green

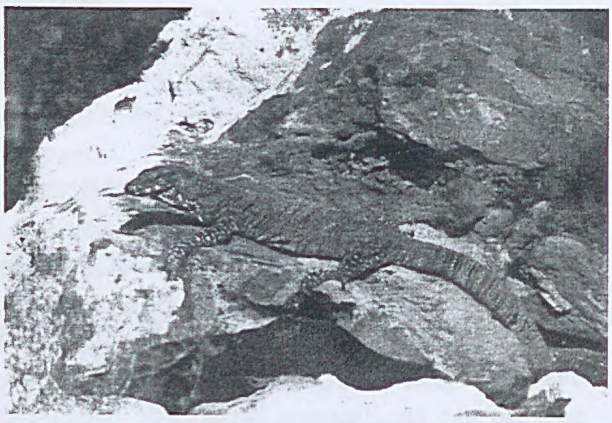
Monitors ***Varanidae***

This group of lizards includes some of the largest in the world. The limbs are well developed with large claws suited for climbing trees although they are typically terrestrial. The tongue is deeply forked like that of a snake and is constantly flicked in and out the mouth when alert. This group of lizards are typically known as goannas or monitor lizards.

Sand Goanna ***Varanus gouldii***

V.gouldii obtains a STL of 1.6m, its colour is light yellow to almost black with numerous small, scattered, lighter and darker flecks and spots. The last several centimetres of the tail being uniform pale yellow. A common feature is a dark stripe running from behind the eye to the neck edged with a light colour. It is a ground dwelling species found in a wide variety of habitats from sclerophyll forests to sandy deserts. *V.gouldii* feeds upon small vertebrates, arthropods and carrion, often foraging up to 2km per day stopping to dig for prey in any small burrow it encounters. They frequently raise themselves on their hind legs and tail to obtain a view of their surroundings or when defensive. The defensive tripodal posture is also accompanied with hissing, distended throat, arching of the back and lunging. Often sheltering in hollow logs, dense litter or in several burrows of their own or another animals. Although they occur throughout the Bendigo district, they are not frequently encountered. They are often encountered as a road-kill. Records for this species are from Llanelly, Whipstick, Junortoun, Jackass flat, Axedale, Tooleen, Shelbourne, Inglewood, Longlea, Myers Flat, Specimen Hill, and Wellsford Forest.

Lace Goanna ***Varanus varius***



Being Australia's second largest lizard, *V.varius* may reach a formidable STL of two meters. It is a dark blue colour with numerous scattered yellow to cream scales or groups of scales forming spots and blotches. A common feature is a vertical bar on the snout. Foraging extensively in search of food, *V.varius* investigates all suitable hollows and crevices for food items such as vertebrates, arthropods, eggs and carrion. During mid-summer, the breeding season, males may be seen in combat. Females lay 8 to 12 eggs usually in termite nests where the termites keep the eggs at a suitable incubation temperature. When pursued, they will take to trees readily, however if cornered they distend the throat, hiss, rear on hind legs and lash with its powerful tail. Occurring in a wide variety of habitats including woodlands and sclerophyll forests in the Bendigo district, they are not frequently encountered. Records are from Wellsford Forest. Pilchers Bridge, Laanecoorie, Lyell Forest Eppalock, Kamarooka, Tandarra, Shelbourne, Huntly, Maldon, Heathcote, Barnadown and Runnymede.

Acknowledgements
I wish to acknowledge my old 'herping' partner Dale Gibbons who graciously bestowed his knowledge and records.

References
COGGER, H.G. (2000) *Reptiles & Amphibians of Australia*, 6th edition, New Holland Publishers, Australia.
EHMANN, H. (1992) *Encyclopaedia of Australian Animals: Reptiles*, Angus & Robertson, Australia.
VINCENT, M. & WILSON, S. (1999) *Australian Goannas*, New Holland Publishers, Sydney.
WILSON, S.K., & KNOWLES, D.G. (1988) *Australia's Reptiles; A Photographic Reference to the Terrestrial Reptiles of Australia*, Collins Publishers, Australia.

The Circle of Life

Chief White Cloud
Known as White Cloud the Prophet; Real Name: Wabokieshiek
A Sac Chief of the Ho Hunk Tribe
Illinois C 1794 – 1835

Man has a poor understanding of life. He mistakes knowledge for wisdom. He tries to unveil the holy secrets of our father, the Great Spirit. He attempts to impose his laws and ways on Mother Earth. Even though he, himself, is part of nature, he chooses to disregard and ignore it for the sake of his own immediate gain. But the laws of nature are far stronger than those of mankind. Man must awake at last, and learn to understand how little time there remains before he will become the cause of his own downfall. And he has so much to learn. To learn to see with the heart. He must learn to respect Mother Earth-She who has given life to everything; to our brothers and sisters, the animals and plants; to the rivers, the lakes, the oceans and the winds. He must realize that this planet does not belong to him, but that he has to care for and maintain the delicate balance of nature for the sake of the wellbeing for our children and all future generations. It is the duty of mankind to preserve the earth and the creation of the Great Spirit. Mankind being but a grain of sand in the holy circle which encloses all of life.

(submitted by John Burtonclay)

What is an Australian naturalist anyway?
By Chris and Sandra Bunn

The early generations of Europeans to Australia found themselves surrounded by a flora and fauna completely different from anything seen before. Short-term visitors carried away vast numbers of specimens to fill the museum cabinets of Europe. Throughout the 18th century astonishing creatures from distant regions seemed to turn up in London almost daily. In 1771 Joseph Banks had brought back thousands of plant and animal specimens after three years travelling around the world with Captain Cook on the *Endeavour*.

Among their prizes were the skin and skull of a large creature with a head like a deer, said to rise up on two legs. It was also said to use those legs to go bounding across the grasslands of Australia like a hare, but with its long tail serving for balance. Banks announced it to the natural world with a borrowed aboriginal name: 'Kangura' (*Natural History, March 2008*).

In Australia, some 'naturalists' became professional collectors to supply the market for new specimens back in London. Others, less commercially inclined, sought out new species for the purpose of serious scientific study, either by themselves or, more commonly, by patrons, such as Banks, for the upper ranks of European science.
As the Australian population grew so too did the number of people who took an interest in Australia's natural forms. Scientific societies formed depending on their strength on the support of the local governor. These included

governors such as Sir Thomas Brisbane in NSW, 1821-1825 and Sir John Franklin in Tasmania, 1837-43. However, such societies either became involved in political in-fighting or faded, once support from the governor changed with time.

As the colonies expanded and became wealthier, a series of scientific appointments provided the nucleus around which strong central institutions could form. For example from 1854 to 1872, Ferdinand Mueller was a member of the Victorian Institute for the Advancement of Science, which later became the Philosophical Institute of Victoria. He was President of the Philosophical Institute in 1859 when it received a Royal Charter and became the Royal Society of Victoria.

With the rise of biology as a new, experimentally and professionally based life science during the final decades of the 19th century, the old-style natural history became more the legacy of the amateur naturalist. As naturalist clubs formed key words in their objectives were 'field' and 'observer'. By retaining this emphasis on observation amateur naturalists, often subconsciously rejected the criteria by the professionals to always be 'scientific'.
{The description above comes from a very interesting book I have just finished reading *Paradise revealed – Natural history in 19th century Australia* by Colin Finney}
So what is your current definition of a naturalist? I think of a naturalist as someone whose curiosity of the natural world is boundless. A person, who delights in the beauty of the natural world, is in love with the whole of life and hopes to walk in harmony with the other life on the planet. A naturalist probably believes that human growth for the sake of growth is the ideology of a cancer cell and ultimate disaster and believes every animal or plant has a right to be part of the chain of life.
Whenever we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the universe – John Muir US naturalist, founder of the Sierra Club

---

May General Meeting 'Thing of the Night'
By Sabine Wilkens

Ben Goonan gave a talk about local Swainson Pea species and we were treated to a series of wonderful slides showing us the varieties found on roadsides in the district.
Swainsona procumbens has a lovely blue flower, lots of leaflets in its compound leaf and is found right across Central Victoria (north of the Divide) it does tolerate some waterlogging and is often found in wetter places.
S. plagiotropis is found east of Kerang and is quite a rare species. Its flowers are pinky-red.
S. marina is bright pink and a distinguishing feature is that it only has three leaflets. It occurs north of Bendigo, but there are plenty of populations found in NSW as well.
The very showy *S. swainsinoides* has a dense upright inflorescence. When Lake Cooper dried up, it was found growing at the bottom of the lakebed, so its seeds must be very persistent. This species has quite large populations North and West of Bendigo.
S. sericea is a small plant with small leaves but is very showy. It occurs north of Bendigo but there are also many populations in NSW This species and *S. behriana* used to be a single species, the latter being the most common Swainson Pea around Bendigo woodlands. It often has deep blue flowers and its distribution is straddling the Dividing Range.
S ferricoides only exists from a single 100 year old record. It is similar to *S. behriana* in appearance.

These lovely Swainson peas can be propagated easily and also grown from seed. However, as a note of caution, Matthew Comer added that they are also quite attractive to slugs and snails.

This was an interesting and visually attractive talk that highlighted the treasures found on our roadsides. Hopefully Ben will travel these places for a long time to come, in order to discover more of them.

May General Meeting – Speaker: Stacey Bloomfield (Waterkeepers Australia)

By Sabine Wilkens

Stacey comes from an organization which is not (yet) well known in Australia. She began her talk with a 'commercial' from the US where the model had evolved. The concept of a waterkeeper was started in the 1960s by a local businessman and philanthropist, Robert Doyle, who was very concerned about the health of the Hudson River. This river had become severely degraded with many users withdrawing water and discharging waste water into the river. The main threats identified at the time were PCB (polychlorinated biphenyls) in fish and oil discharge. In 1966 the Hudson River Fishermen's Association decided that grass root support was needed to save the river. Someone found a useful piece of legislation (Federal Refuse Act 1899) which proclaimed pollution of public rivers illegal and the group successfully sued the oil company for polluting. After this the concept of a river keeper was conceived as a person patrolling the Hudson looking for disturbances, restoring fish populations and holding polluters responsible.

This idea then inspired a range of different waterkeepers all over the continent and beyond and today there are 170 organisations around the world who share this vision.

The waterkeeper model is unique in that an actual person, who acts like the spokesperson for the waterbody, is physically on the water. This gives a live voice to the waterway (a necessity also supported by Tim Flannery).
In Australia, where water resources are scarce indeed, a need for such a spokesperson was identified and its establishment was initiated by the Myer Foundation after an initial visit to America. Today there are 19 waterkeeper projects in Australia.

The role of waterkeepers is manyfold – they a member of the local community and thus connect it with the waterway, they are the spokesperson, the first point of contact, they are communicators to other bodies of authority and keep them accountable and they are educators. Most importantly they are the eyes and ears on the water and monitor its wellbeing.

In Melbourne, Ian Penrose is the waterkeeper for the Yarra River. He has already made a difference by alerting authorities to an unauthorised construction site that caused much erosion and runoff as well as untreated discharge being released from a residential site. He takes councillors and politicians on the river to see first hand what needs to be done. He has given public talks, has instigated the 'Go Yarra Flow' campaign and is getting much media attention, all of which draws attention to the river.

Paul Davies is the keeper of the Koorong, Lake Alexandrian, Lake Albert and part of the Murray (a very large job indeed). Over-allocation and drought has severely threatened this area. One campaign Paul is involved in is to stop a proposed weir at Wellington. Another campaign is to add the site to the Montreux list of of Ramsar sites.

Stacey is the program coordinator for Australia. She has unbound enthusiasm for the cause and will undoubtedly make a difference to the health of our waterways. If anybody has a project they want to propose to Stacey, she is very happy to discuss future programs.

To me this was a totally new concept and a very interesting one.

If you want to find out more, the website is a good starting point at
http://www.waterkeepers.org.au/

Grass Trees in the Crosbie Nature Conservation Reserve

A report from a meeting of Clive Fisher with staff from DSE (Bendigo and Melbourne offices)

We met at 8.30am at the intersection of the McIvor and Northern Highways at Heathcote, and drove in the DSE 4WD to the old xanthorrhoeas in the Crosbie Nature Conservation Reserve.

The purpose of the exercise was to show the DSE personnel, Alison Stone and Gil from their Melbourne office, and Rob Price from their Bendigo office, the *X. glauca* that have not experienced a fire over them since 1843, so proving that fire in the box-ironbark is a rarity.

I hoped that they would then agree that it is not necessary to conduct any sort of burn in this type of forest.

I gave them copies of Marc Bellette's *Whirrakee* article where he said the 'glaucas' grow up to 5 metres high when the trunks are protected to ground level by skirts, as the skirt allows the trunks to expand sideways, providing support for the extra weight.

I also gave them copies of the reference to the fire that burned over a large area in the Heathcote-Rushworth district in 1843, telling them that Marc had told me that when he examined the trunks, the height of the unburnt skirt-covered trunks from the small ring of burnt trunk at ground level, and the rate at which xanthorrhoeas grow, point to them experiencing fire in the 1840s and not since.

Rob told me that when they burnt part of the Rushworth forest this year, they first burnt the skirts off the grass-trees, starting at the top, and then set the control burn. This was done, he said, so that the 'x.s' would not burn fiercely enough to kill them.

Alison was very impressed with the height of these 'glaucas', the largest she has seen in Victoria, and agreed they were worth saving.

Rob told me that the DSE had looked at the Crosbie Nature Conservation Reserve this year, and decided that the "fuel loads were not enough to warrant a burn this year, but they will look at it again next year, and may burn it then.

When I asked Rob if the DSE had received any requests from surrounding land-holders for them to burn it, he said as far as he knew, they had not. This tells me that they will burn whether asked to or not, because they believe they should.

I believe Rob has not changed his mind about burning box-ironbark forest, and I don't think Alison and Gil have either, but time will tell. After the visit to Crosbie today, they planned to fly up to the Big Desert to plan burns there. It was a pleasant morning's get-together.

And a few more concluding remarks....

1. The DSE personnel on the site were unaware that there were xanthorrhoeas in the Crosbie Forest even after their assessment for fuel loads.

2. Alison Stone, who is the Executive Director, Land and Fire Management, DSE, thought that *X. australis* was the only x. species in Victoria, until informed by me of others.

3.All DSE personnel present at the site were unaware that the skirts provide a thick protective stem which allows the tree to obtain a height of up to 6 metres, as explained and pictorially shown in Marc Bellette's article in the June 2003 article of *Whirrakee*.

4. Rob Price is plotting a GPS position for the 'glaucas' in Crosbie and will send me a copy.

1.4.08 GN 08.086

Department of Sustainability and Environment

8 Nicholson Street
PO Box 500 East Melbourne
Victoria 3002 Australia
Telephone: (03) 9637 8000
Facsimile: (03) 9637 8100
ABN 90 719 052 204
DX 210098

Our Ref: DSE052071
File: FF/44/0153

Ms Anne Bridley
Bendigo Field Naturalists Club Inc.
PO Box 396
BENDIGO VIC 3550

Dear Ms Bridley

2008 STUBBLE QUAIL HUNTING SEASON

Thank you for your recent letter of 26 March 2008, to The Honourable Gavin Jennings MLC, Minister for Environment and Climate Change, regarding quail hunting. The Minister has asked me to reply.

The Department of Sustainability and Environment annually assesses habitat models to determine indices of quail populations. This analysis concluded that a recreational hunting season for Stubble Quail could be sustained in 2008, without compromising the long-term conservation of the species.

Stubble Quail hunting is regulated under the Wildlife (Game) Regulations 2001, which prescribes the bag limit and season period. This ensures that quail are not harvested at potentially vulnerable periods throughout the year.

Habitat loss and degradation are considered to pose the most significant threat to quail and other bird populations in Victoria. In response, the Government has purchased important areas of habitat on the Northern Plains, and is reducing habitat loss through market-based land management approaches that provide improved and year-round habitat for grassland species such as quail.

In addition, quail management in Victoria will be enhanced through an improved harvest monitoring program that will be delivered as part of the Government's *Enhancing Game Management* initiative.

The Government will continue to ensure that quail hunting is conducted in a sustainable manner.

Yours sincerely

Kimberley Dripps

Kimberley Dripps
Executive Director
Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services

11 / 4 / 2008

Victoria
The Place To Be

Find out more about the Department by calling our Customer Service Centre on 136 186 or visit our website at www.dse.vic.gov.au

Diary

The General, Bird Observers Group and Fauna Study Group meetings are held at the Golden Square Senior Citizens Building, Old High Street, Golden Square, unless otherwise indicated.

General Meetings

Wednesday, June 11 7.30pm
Geoff Lay will talk about 'Fungi of the Box-Ironbark Forest'

Wednesday, July 9 7.30pm
Chris Tzaros (Birds Australia), bird topic to be determined…

Excursions

Contact Richard Goonan if you have any comments, questions or ideas for excursions (ph 0423418815).

Fauna Group

This group meets (in the clubrooms) on the fourth Wednesday of the month at 7.30pm.

Wednesday, June 25 7.30pm
Topic for discussion to be determined.

Regular Fauna Excursions

Every Friday morning starting at around 9 to 9:30, the Fauna Group inspects nest boxes in the Spring Gully area. The excursions are led by Maurie Lewis, 16 Vains St. Golden Square. Phone 0407 427 179 or 5442 1813. Phone Maurie to confirm exact departure times and location. If you don't phone but go directly to Maurie's house and find nobody at the house between 9 and 9:30 then the excursion is not on.

Field Naturalist Club of Victoria
FNCV Biodiversity Symposium 2008

Sunday 14 September
Topic: Birds and the Urban Environmentcontact: Mary Gibson 92517466 or e-mail maryg@deakin.edu.au

Wildlife Rescue & Information Network Inc.

W.R.I.N. is an organisation dedicated to the care of orphaned, sick or injured native animals. It is fully endorsed by the Dept of Sustainability and Environment.
Please call our Emergency Number for Help for Fauna in Need. Phone: 0419 356433.

Australian Naturalists Network (ANN) Get-together 10-18 May 2008

Mary River Park, Northern Territory.
Expression of interest & deposit of $200 was due to NTFNC by 1/10/07.
Accommodation at Mary River Park was to be booked directly by end of October 07.
The **second notice** has been received. This includes an update on accommodation availability at Mary River Park (cabins are essentially full) plus lists of tour operators and natural history references.
Anne Bridley (54493479) has further details

Friends of the Box-Ironbark Forests

(Mount Alexander region) **Bushwalks 2008**
All walks are on Sundays. Meet 9.30 am outside 30 Templeton Street, Castlemaine (Continuing Ed.) and carpool to the start of the walk. Take water, morning tea and lunch. Non-members welcome. No cost. (Walks are cancelled on Total Fire Ban days.)
For more information ring Bronwyn Silver on 5475 1089.

15 June – Mount Lofty

Visit Mount Lofty (near Redesdale), the lowest mountain in Mount Alexander Shire. Easy walk. c. 8 km. For more information ring Doug Ralph 5470 5407

20 July Fryers Ridge Nature Conservation Reserve

Range of native plants, creekline vegetation, interesting rocks, up hills & down gullies. c. 8 km.
For more information ring Barbara Johnson 5423 2773.